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Contribution to the study of the urban development north of Seville's first wall. Morphogenesis of the area within the streets Feria, Perís Mencheta y la Alameda de Hércules.

Miguel Torres García

Introduction

- 1 The North sector of Seville's historic city centre has only recently become a study object. Literature on it is scarce and, with some exceptions, only partial. Medieval Muslim sources are few and those corresponding to Christian domination are at most descriptive of the city's state at the moment of its taking rather than analytical. The study of this traditionally neglected area began during the second half of the 1980's.
- 2 There are two milestones referring the area approached by this article; the first one, the 1986 excellent text by Rafael Valencia, which gathered the Islamic sources and their main interpretations into a comprehensive hypothesis of Muslim Seville's urban space. The second one is the hypothesis formulated by J. Campos Carrasco, also in 1986, as a result of an emergency archaeological excavation which he had undertaken at the number 8 of Joaquín Costa Street

"The geoarchaeological approach of urban realms in highly dynamic natural environments has acquired great relevance [...] it incorporates a new perspective into the analysis of the relationship of man with his most immediate surroundings, regarding habitat settling and territory control strategies as much as for considering the incidence of natural risks upon urban infrastructures [...]"

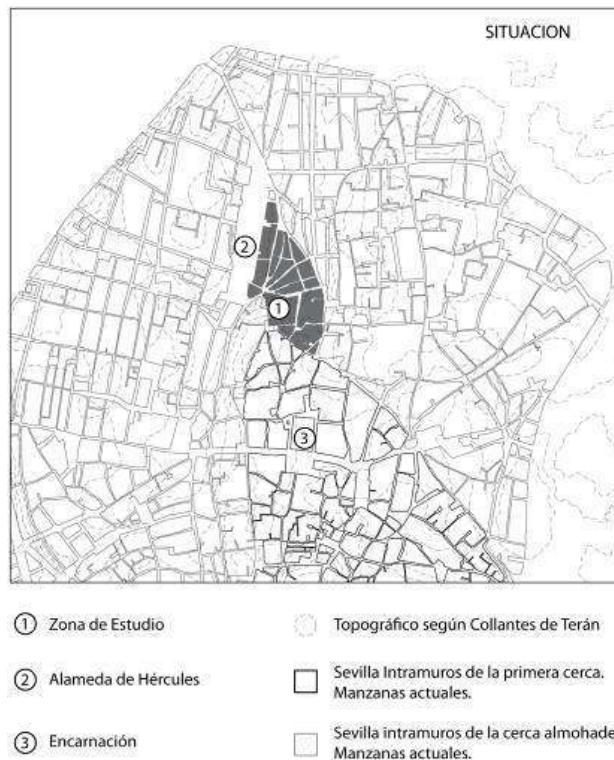
- 7 To this purpose I have consulted the test drillings corresponding to the mentioned archaeological surveys, as well as a few others conducted on the occasion of different geotechnical studies. These last ones have been kindly provided by the company Vorsevi S.A. Concerning the topographical data on the area, there was no access to a full-scale, up-to-date survey, though the water supply company EMSAESA could provide of a series of tacheometric points belonging to the area of study. As these did not produce wide enough a framework as to recreate the area's context, those historical maps of Seville containing topographical information were consulted². The topography annexed by Collantes de Terán Delorme to his 1977 study³ has also been retrieved and processed.
- 8 This study concluded before the release of the book "Estudio geoarqueológico de la Ciudad de Sevilla: Antropización y reconstrucción Paleográfica durante el Holoceno reciente" by Barral Muñoz⁴. This is a thorough, highly recommendable research that enlightens the rapport between Seville's urban development and and its topographic context over time. As to its conclusions, they barely affect those reached herein, partly due to each of them dealing different scales.
- 9 Barral's study supports the theory sustaining that the river Guadalquivir's evolution at its contact with Seville had been that of a meander that had become accentuated further away from Seville's first wall. Formerly, it was of wider acceptance that the Guadalquivir was split in two riverbeds, of which the closest to town –the "urban branch"– had gradually been losing flow in favour of the current one. It is again an issue that belongs to a larger scale, but in any case the object of this study is located at the river's eastern riverbank and in my opinion, in a context of recession of the waters, its conclusions are valid in either case. For this reason, as for my inability to decide on the idoneity of one hypothesis or the other, I have not modified the depiction of the river's development in this article's illustrations.
- 10 In any case, as far as this study belongs to much wider conceptual and spatial scopes, it has not exhausted all research options itself, those involving a systematic study of any available data on the soil's geological strata and a thorough analysis leading to putting dates to its evolution. Moreover, the coordination of sources coming from so diverse disciplines advices for upholding reasonable doubt insofar as the author does not credit knowledge of all of them. Nevertheless, having checked the theories herein with the referenced experts, I believe they are sufficiently solid as to provide of an alternative context to be applied to other studies which might pay attention in the future to this characteristic area of Seville's historic centre.

2. The sector north of the Imperial Roman and early medieval wall.

- 11 The departure point for the study of Islamic Seville's evolution is the remaining of the wall inherited from Roman Hispalis imperial period. This has been a very much debated issue, due to the laconism and ambiguity of Muslim sources to its regard. Nevertheless,

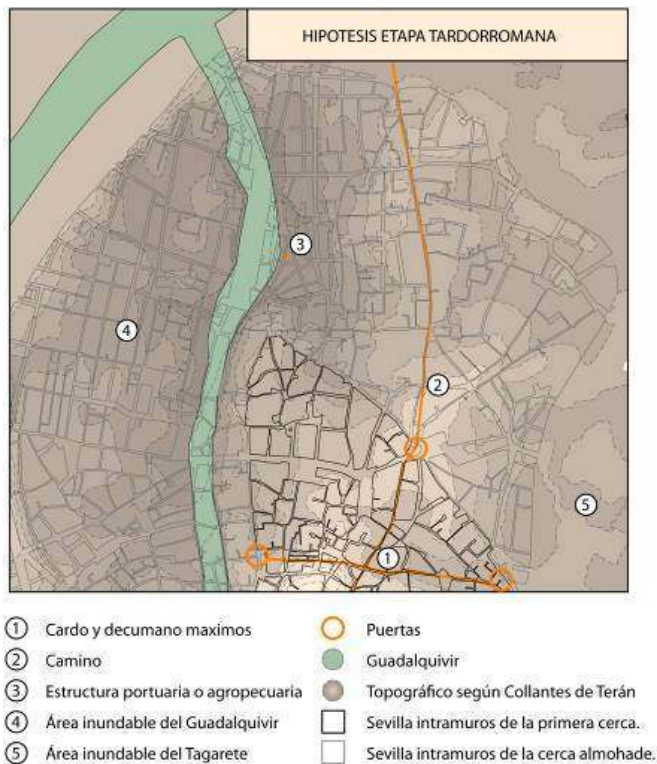
Valencia⁵ does not find evidence of the existence of intermediate fortifications between the Imperial Roman and the Almoravid-Almohad walls.

Situación de la zona de estudio en relación a los dos recintos amurallados



- 12 There is, however, proof of punctual modifications on the Roman wall during the city's Islamic period. The first main one being a restoration undertaken by initiative of Abd al-Rahman II as an answer to the Viking's raids in the first half of the 9th century, about which the sources do not give further details. The second mention in the sources refers to a programmed destruction of the walls by order of the Emir and soon Khalifa Abd al-Rahman an-Nasir, who had been compelled in the year 913 to reduce certain revolts in the city, in order to compromise the autonomy that it had been enjoying to the moment. Valencia aligns with A. Jiménez y J. de M. Carriazo⁶ in the belief that this demolishing was not to be fulfilled due to the protests of the citizens who, still in the memory of the Normand attacks, would feel exposed against new raids and, supposedly, the river's floods.
- 13 It is pertinent to underline here the double defensive function of Seville's wall, both against military attacks as against the river's swells. It is widely accepted that the irregular contour of imperial Seville, closer to a triangular shape rather than rectangular, is conditioned by the topographical characteristics of the terrain where it settles, which undoubtedly produced more economic and strategic advantages than comfort. It is important for our case study to note that the north-western vertex of the wall occupies the edge of a natural terrace, a strategically valuable position over the river, standing relatively safe from floods.

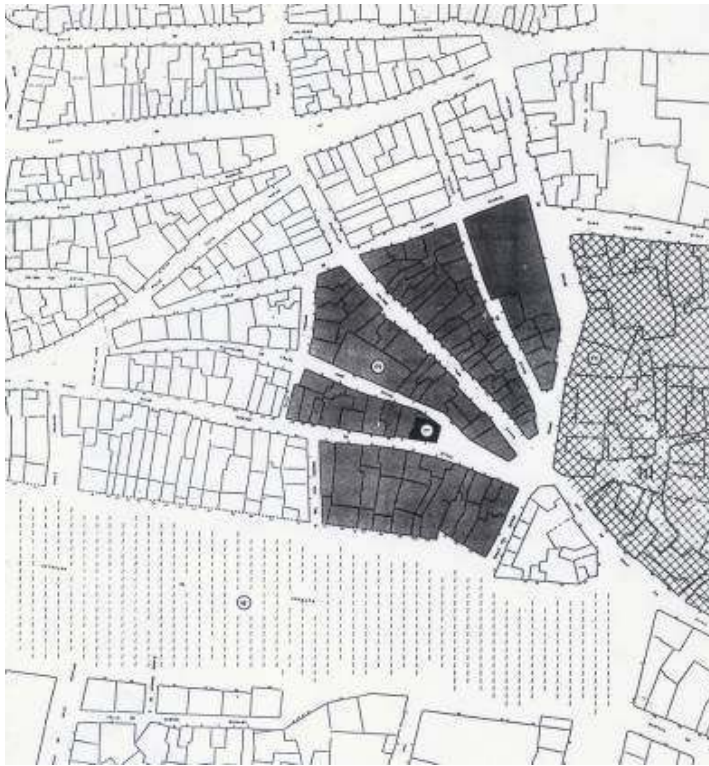
Imperial Hispalis, in its topographical context. Elaborated by the author, by combining data from the works by Collantes de Terán y Delorme, Valencia Rodríguez and Gestoso Morote



- 14 It is also widely acknowledged that the city's cardus maximus is slightly deviated eastwards. By examining a topographical plan like the one proposed by Collantes de Terán⁷, it is noticeable that the northern gate into Hispalis walls was placed in the highest spot between the basins of the river Tagarete and the ancient "urban" branch of the Guadalquivir, which ran through today's Alameda de Hércules, Amor de Dios and Sierpes streets, to join back the main riverbed in the Arenal. The current situation of this gate is in the whereabouts of Santa Catalina's church and its corresponding roman road would go by nowadays San Luis Street.
- 15 Regarding roman times, the excavations undergone in the study area have detected disperse structures which have been associated to agricultural or maybe port uses. Specifically, remains of a farm of imperial period have been found in Divina Enfermera, 14⁸; and of a late roman sidewall of temporary farm or dock use in Joaquín Costa, 32⁹.
- 16 Coming back to the discussion about the roman wall's modifications between the 9th and 10th centuries, it seems that what really was carried out in 913 was a mere permeating operation, this is, additional gates or wickets were opened¹⁰. Nevertheless there seems to be evidence of the prior -during the rule of Abd al-Rahman II on whose initiative Seville's walls were restaured after the Normand attack in 844- opening of a second gate north of the wall¹¹ identified as Bab al-Hadid.
- 17 The number and distribution of the resulting gates ensemble is object of discussion, being the two main hypotheses those of Valencia and the previous formulation made by José Guerrero Lovillo in his study about the abbadi al-Mubarak palace ¹². They are both inclined to spot the new redundant gates on the west and east walls, though in his last

statement to this respect, Valencia considers the possibility of having them opened on the north side¹³.

- 18 The option of having a new gate opened in this part of the city as well gets much more strengthened by the recent finding of a 10th century cemetery during an archaeological excavation in Divina Enfermera Street. This new piece of information strongly suggests the existence of a gate in its vicinity, as medieval Muslim graveyards would usually be located immediately out of the city boundaries and relate to gates and access roads¹⁴.
- 19 There are other typical characteristics of hispano-muslim cemeteries of the time that can be reckoned, as the fact of being located on a hillside and nearby a water course ¹⁵. Against intuition, Cordoba's al-Rabad cemetery shows that no inconvenient was found in practicing burials on terrains liable to be flooded. The graveyards were irregular in shape, they were not enclosed or fenced and could grow both by extension or accumulation. Hence they could contain several levels of burials, as it is the case of the one excavated in Divina Enfermera Street, particularly in their most appreciated locations, next to gates or sanctuaries.
- 20 Ibn 'Abdun's treaty¹⁶, dated late 11th or early 12th century refers to the city's cemeteries conditions. It mentions two of them, namely "the city's" and "the potters' graveyard" in the whereabouts of Bab Hamida gate, near the current position of the cathedral. The theory placing there this gate, opposed to that of Guerrero Lovillo¹⁷, stands strengthened after the finding of abandoned kilns underneath the Alcazar¹⁸. Regardless of the exact location of the cemeteries mentioned by Ibn 'Abdun, it is of interest how they are described. They appear -at the moment preceding the definitive enhancement of the city walls- crowded to the point of practicing new burials on top of former ones. This is confirmed by the recent excavations, which have documented superimposed entombments or even bodies that were moved when depositing others¹⁹.
- 21 It is therefore plausible that there were a second gate north of the city, opened during the second half of the 9th century, thus matching the dating of the oldest tombs found in the area. The literature considers placing it either on the current S. Juan de la Palma or S. Martín squares. It is understood that both spaces could be the remains of open spaces typical of access points to the city.
- 22 The main supporter of the gate's being in S. Martín square is archaeologist Campos Carrasco²⁰ whose attention was driven towards the characteristic fan-shape distribution of streets Joaquín Costa, Juan Pérez de Montalbán, Correduría y Conde de Torrejón, during an emergency archaeological excavation in Joaquín Costa Street²¹. Due to the confluence of these streets' south ends on the Europa Square, Campos ventured the theory of them being evidence of an ancient road network leading to a gate situated in a narrowing in Divina Enfermera Street, next to S. Martín church. Campos proposes that it be Bab al-Hadid, a gate that the sources associate to a marketplace which Campos identifies with the ensemble of long narrow blocks between the mentioned streets. For Campos, who eludes the specific position of the gate, this suburb and its souk took shape due to an access to the Abbadi palace of al-Mukarram, which would be built between the wall and the current Conde de Torrejón street.



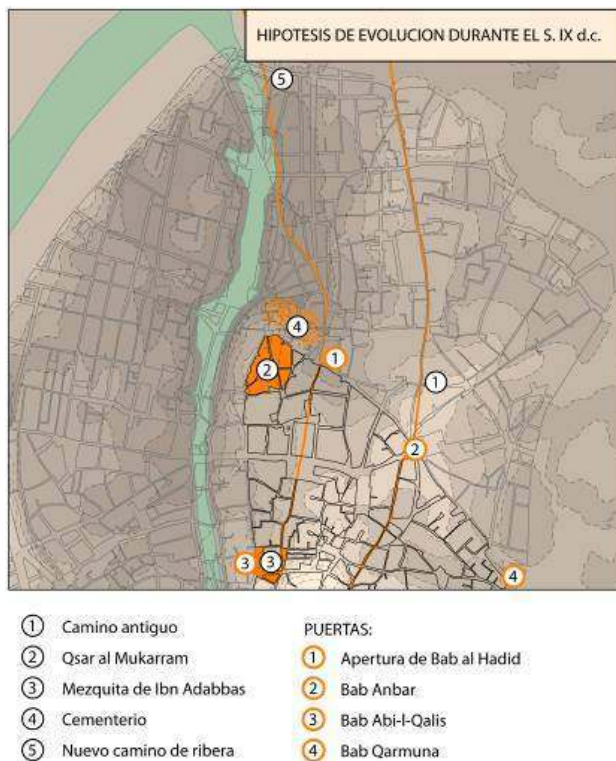
CAMPOS CARRASCO HYPOTHESIS AS IT APPEARS IN HIS REFERENCED WORK. IN BLACK, THE LOT SUBJECTED TO EXCAVATION, TO THE RIGHT, PATTERNED, THE LOCATION OF AL-MUKARRAM PALACE. SHADED IN GREY, THE WEDGE-SHAPE BLOCKS FOLLOWING THE ASSUMED TRACES OF BAB AL-HADID MARKETPLACE

- 23 The logics behind this hypothesis are only partial, as can be appreciated in several points. Firstly, it was the roman practice to open gates in the central areas of wall panes while reinforcing the corners. It is not of course exempt of exceptions, but this would be a strategically interesting point, being elevated and protecting the north wall from possible attacks from the river. This deters from considering a gate in such a position during roman times, but the same logics are to be expected during Muslim rule: if we accept as evident that the roman north gate (in Sta. Catalina) was built away from the rivers' flooding line, the opening of this new gate to the west could mean a recess of that line. That is, between the 1st and 9th centuries, as a part of the disappearance process of the river's "urban branch", the flood area to the northwest of the city had retracted.
- 24 In that sense Guerrero Lovillo's theory²², understanding that the Al-Mukarram palace was inside the walls in that same corner, seems more appropriate as it would occupy a topographically advantageous position and concentrate military power in a strategically relevant spot. This is an interesting possibility not only in order to locate this new gate on the wall, but also for the implications it might have regarding the urban development of our study area, as we will see later on.
- 25 Secondly, Campos considers only the first stretches of the mentioned streets, ignoring the rest of their path. At their northern half these streets deviate, describing approximately a series of arcs which join again at Mata Square. It is not thus a ramification, typical of a city's exit towards the territory, but instead its geometry suggests different causes.
- 26 Thirdly, Campos is right in coupling an urban structure of long, narrow blocks and small lots with commercial activity. But the ultimate cause of this morpho-typology is the land's economic return: In a commercial district land yields larger profit than in any

other urban environment such as residential. This raises land prices and bring about two consequences: the diminishing of the typical lot's surface and a capillary street grid, being street-contact also a valuable feature. We would hence be witnessing a process of great increase of property value in an unlikely spot, being the most exposed to the river's frequent floods and neighbouring what later on the inhabitants would refer as "the stench lagoon".

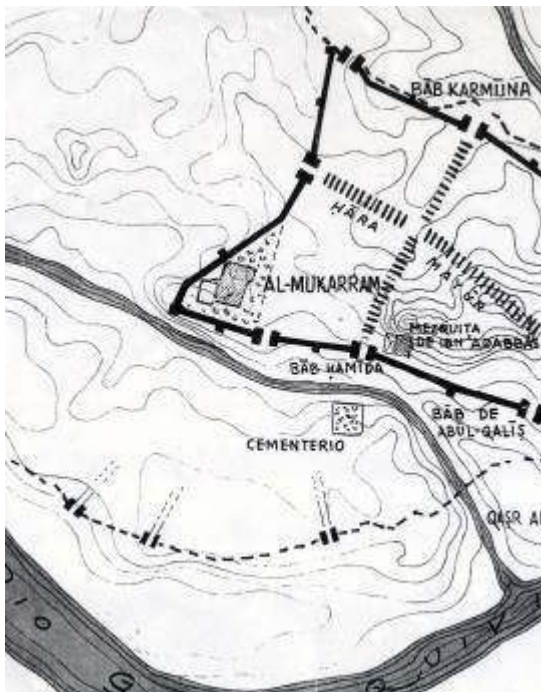
- 27 Finally, the documented finding of abundant burials in the area makes it incompatible with the location of the second palace in emiral Seville.
- 28 We should then decide on the option of, had there been a second gate in the north pane of the wall, having had it open in the S. Juan de la Palma square. This is a compatible hypothesis with the scarce sources which refer to the gate Bab el-Hadid. According to Ibn Hayyan²³, the hayib Badr entered the city through this gate, in his way from Cordoba along a road that passed by Tocina, this is, following the route that, along the riverside, passed by Alcalá del Río.

Creación de un segundo eje urbano con la apertura de Bab al-Hadid



- 29 This chronicle relates the bargaining of the city's submission to the authority of Cordoba, and Bab al-Hadid has an important role in it. Not only can a tentative location be assumed hence, but also the fact of the gate's existence prior to the 10th century. As noted before, we know that the wall's restoration works were undertaken during Abd al-Rahman II's rule. This is not an isolated intervention if we considered that already in 830 the Khalifa had promoted the construction of the Grand Mosque of Ibn Adabbas, located where now El Salvador church is, and a dockyard²⁴. Moreover, we know²⁵ that he summoned Muhammad Ben Said Ben Abi Sulayman, from the city of Nakour²⁶, to assist him in urban planning tasks; this may indicate that these projects on the city were not disconnected initiatives, but rather followed a common strategy.

- 30 In a different occasion²⁷ it is told how rowboats passed between the Ibn Adabbas mosque and Bab al-Hadid's market during the year 1200's flood. Beyond the anecdote, this narration would attempt, in my opinion, to give information on the magnitude of the flood which, in other words, would have inundated all the lower parts of city.
- 31 As for the marketplace referred by the sources, it is to consider that a gate in S. Juan de la Palma would connect directly with the commercial axis of Regina Street, Encarnación and Siete Revueltas, leading to El Salvador. During a first expansion moment, should this be a marketplace linked to local commerce, its suppliers coming from the orchards north of the city and the Guadalquivir's lowlands, sailing the river or by the riverside. We could even suppose that the weekly outer market, typical of Hispanic-muslim settlement networks²⁸ had been removed from the city's most prosperous commerce axes, to be accommodated out of this gate, having survived until nowadays in the shape of El Jueves.



DETAIL OF GUERRERO LOVILLO'S DRAWING PROPOSING THE LOCATION OF AL-MUKARRAM PALACE. NOTICE THE THE TOPOGRAPHIC SCHEME, PLACING THE GATE AT STA. CATALINA AT THE WALL'S HIGHEST SPOT; THE TERRACE AT THE NORTH-WESTERN ANGLE AND THE DEPRESSION IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF IT (NOTE AS WELL THAT MANY DEPICTIONS OF SEVILLE ARE TRADITIONALLY ORIENTED WITH THE NORTH TO THE LEFT).

- 32 It is not within the scope of this study to locate the rest of the imperial-islamic walls' gates, though it is acknowledged that suggesting a new location for Bab al-Hadid affects the general distribution of the defensive ensemble. Hardly for Guerrero Lovillo's hypothesis, but indeed for the one formulated by Valencia in 1986. The first one proposes a gate adjacent to the Al-Mukarram palace's complex, though no name is specified. It seems logical that the Alcazar had a nearby exit, so the suggested gate by the author could be substituted by the one proposed in this article, accomplishing the same function. Or maybe it is a best option, given that a gate in the west wall would need to overcome an important height difference, as well as the remains of the river's branch. In Valencia's first hypothesis²⁹ Bab al-Hadid is located westwards, in the vicinity of today's Villasís square, and option which, provided that the theories herein be proved, should be reconsidered.

- 33 Finally, the suggested gate distribution corresponds to the urban and road structure of which traces have remained in the almoravid-almohad wall until our days: as S. Luis Street is the remains of the roman road departing from Sta. catalina, for which the Macarena gate was later arranged as a passway through the second wall, the road that covered the distance between S. Juan de la Palma and the Barqueta gate (the toponym bibarragel has remained to witness the departure point of the road to Alcalá del Río) as to go on along the riverside, has kept its traces on the streets Feria, Peris Mencheta and Calatrava.

3. The “Bab al-Hadid suburb”

Determining factors

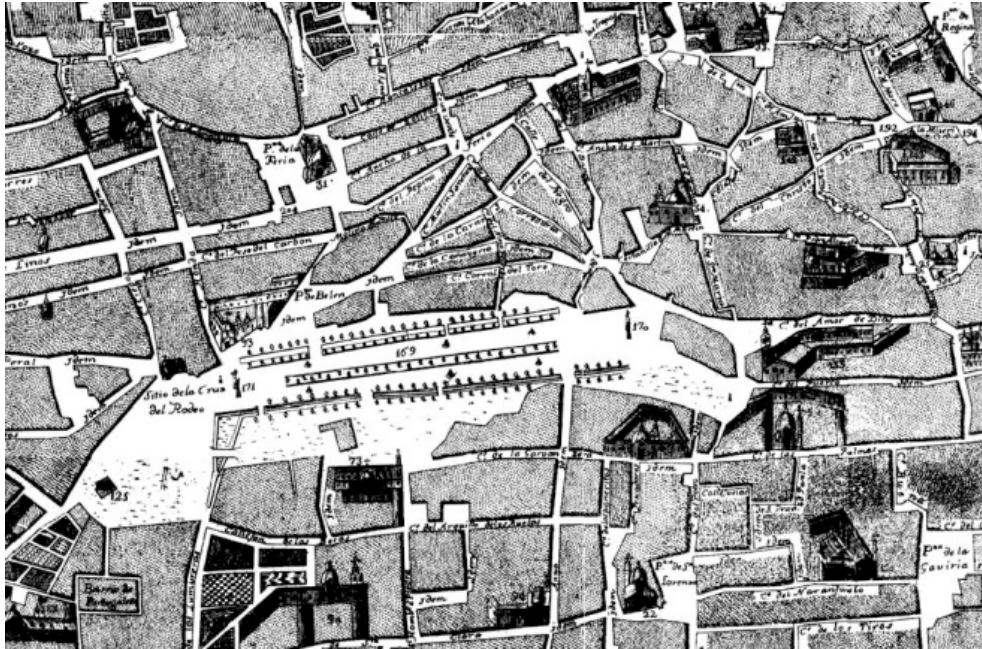
- 34 So far we have defined the boundary conditions in wich the development of Muslim Seville would take place north of its first wall, since the late 10th century. A new gate on the north wall would create a new road joining the river's main course in the whereabouts of nowadays Puerta de la Barqueta. This new gate might have quickly gained importance, as in a short period of time a marketplace would appear by it, also being in a significant spot thanks to neighbouring Isbiliya's second palace, Qsar al-Mukarram.
- 35 Other conditions are needed for the understanding of the new suburb's genesis. To the west the river's urban branch, even if it is in a recession process, still exercises a strong pressure in the shape of frequent floods. In fact Borja Barrera and Barral Muñoz, after a geological study included in an archaeological excavation in Peral Street, assert that “during the centuries 6th to 11th an episode of peaking fluvial dynamics could be identified, followed by general xericity conditions or a recess of the flood pattern in all of the alluvial plains”³⁰. This is a point that could be confirmed on the reports depicting recent archaeological excavations in the area. Whenever it was possible to date the strata, large height differences of up to two or three meters were found between roman and early medieval levels³¹, but just a few tens centimeters between these latter ones and later medieval layers.
- 36 On the other hand, from the 10th century onwards the city experiments a demographic growth, still unmet by a new walling. This is the condition to the appearance of suburbs. Moreover, we know by Ibn ‘Abdun's treaty's³² pointing out the need to expel the potters out of the walls, that industrial activities, or those otherwise molest or polluting were moved outwards and replaced by more noble ones.
- 37 In this same treaty details are given on the state of the city's cemeteries by the end of the 11th or early 12th century. These appear not only insufficient and overcrowded, but also invaded by low quality buildings and occasionally used by small industries for drying adobe bricks or tanned hides. They are also depicted as spaces for unlawful encounters: meeing point for soothsayers, male prostitutes (women had dedicated spaces inside the walls, but homosexual intercourse was apparently worse regarded) or adulterers.

Morphogenesis

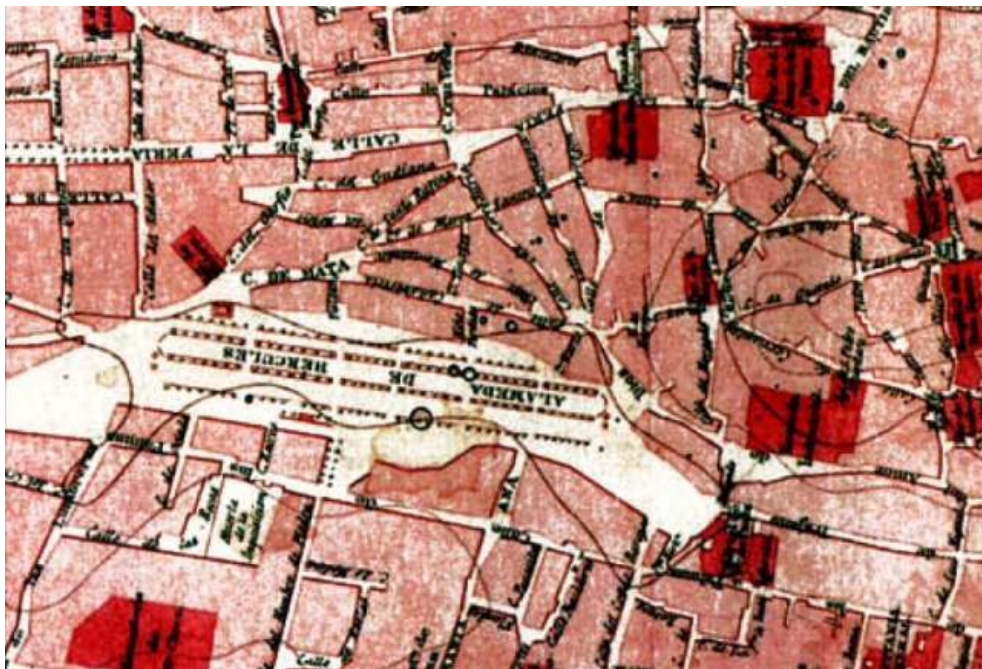
- 38 As noticed by Campos Carrasco, the morphology of the sector enclosed by the streets Feria, Castelar, Pasaje Morgado, Perís Mencheta and the Alameda de Hércules is very

characteristic. If attention is paid to the detailed topography in any of the historical maps (Guerrero Lovillo's sketch is particularly expressive but also Collantes de Terán's or any in the historical plannimetry of Seville is of use), these streets will appear to occupy a small depression on the left bank of the river's urban branch, and to approximately draw the contour lines of this small topographic accident: curves that get more accentuated as we move from the Alameda towards Feria Street³³.

Details from the Olavide and the 1870 military maps (the first one including topographical information)



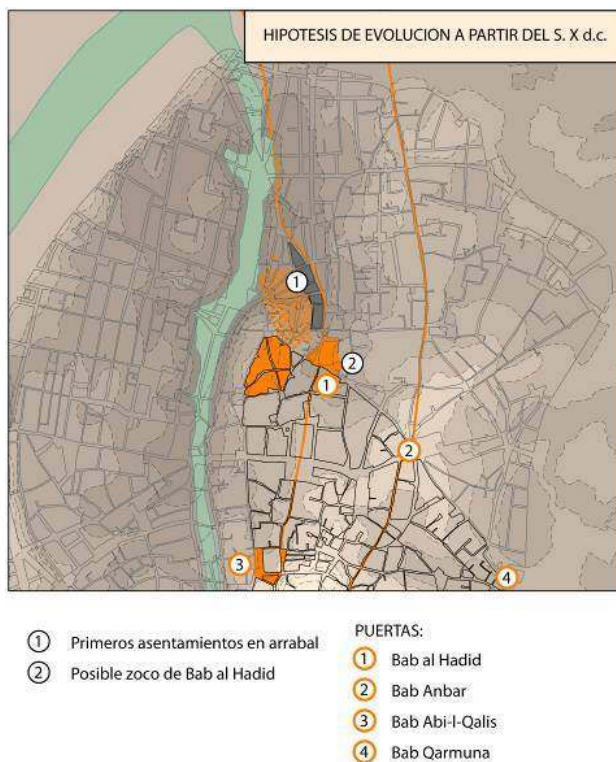
Colección de planos históricos de Sevilla



39 It does not seem to have there been a steep enough slope for a terraced development, therefore in my opinion these shapes are the result of a progressive occupation of the riverside space, as the flood line retracted³⁴. We happen to gather here the conditions which in my opinion should intervene so the resulting urban tissue whould show this process so clearly:

- A phase of intense river activity, having a doublefold influence. On the one hand continuous floods would wash buildings away, but on the other he sediments left would slowly level the terrain.
- A moment of demographic pressure, compelling to settle on these lots in spite of being so exposed.
- That the area provided inherent practical advantages to the activities dwelling therein.
- Low quality building types, putting up little resistance to water action but just as easily rebuilt afterwards.

Beginning of the suburb's shaping out of Bab al-Hadid's gate



40 Regarding the last three points, Joaquín Costa Street, last to having taken shape according to this theory, presents a very expressive instance. There are records about this street since the 15th century, when it used to be named Cañaverería³⁵. This was due to hosting the cane artisans guild, who would gather reed in the wetlands next to the city, probably around the Alameda de Hércules as well (a lagoon at the moment), for storage in their backyards. In the specific case of this street it is easily appreciated (particularly in Olavide's 1776 map) how irregular the back walls of these lots are. Undoubtedly, the terrain's evolution was stopped after the construction of the almoravid-almohad wall and the decrease of the river's activity. These back walls would then freeze in such a state until the filling of the lagoon in 1574 and the later arrangement of an aligned façade towards the Alameda.

- 41 Remaining toponyms still witness the existence to similar activities³⁶. Current Molino Street is named Molino del Yeso (plaster mill) in Olavide's map; Cruz de la Tinaja street was named Tinaja or Tinajas (earthenware jar) up to mid 20th century; there is notice about a charcoal scale in the current Peris Mencheta Street –Ibn 'Abdun also talked about weighting charcoal by the river³⁷–; in the 12th century Quintana Street was known as Albardería, referring to the manufacture of pikes and Correduría Street reminds of leatherware guilds.
- 42 Although very partial, these pieces of information talk about a humble, industrial past, characterized by trades of small economic revenue. For these, it was probably advantageous to stay in a position near the city but still cost-effective in terms of land value, by a fairly relevant road and close to the river course, then surely used as sewer and dump. Using some more up-to-date terms, we would be approaching here the modern concept of an *industrial district*.
- 43 According to Borja and Barral's geo-archaeological study³⁸ and the reviewed archaeological excavations, it is easy to establish the ending of this morphogenetic process at some moment in the 12th century. The beginning would correspond to the opening of the Bab al-Hadid gate and consolidation of the riverside road between it and the later street Bibarragel. I have fixed this moment at the middle of the 9th century seeking for coherence with the corresponding sources.
- 44 Finally, it is left to discuss what came of the blocks enclosed by the streets Conde de Torrejón, Feria, Amor de Dios y Pasaje Morgado. They present a mystery insofar as they should belong to the same suburbia development process, but still show an evidently different morphotypology. This is acknowledged by Campos Carrasco, as noted before, who places there the palace Qsar al-Mukarram, to the front of the wall. After the finding of the Muslim burials this hypothesis (formerly reasonable if we take as a reference the construction of the al-Mubarak palace in nowadays' Alcazares) loses strength.
- 45 According to the data obtained from the fore-mentioned recent excavation in Divina Enfermera Street, the cemetery remained in use until the 12th century, when it was abandoned. It was then respected for an indetermined period of time as a sacred place, and then used as an orchard. There is no evidence of buildings until the 18th century in the area covered by the excavation, but being it a block's interior, these orchards are theoretically compatible with the urban consolidation of its rim. In the light of the data provided by the excavation, and supposing al-Mukarram palace to be inside the wall in its northwestern corner, it is feasible that the terrace's slope had remained clear of constructions for security reasons. This slope stretched from the wall to the Conde de Torrejón Street, a street of unusual configuration, of which it is known it had no name until well into the 17th century and where there was possibly some significant limit, as a water runoff or a sewer of which I could find no reliable reference. By the end of the Taifa period in Seville and the abandonment of al-Mukarram palace, this slope would join the historic centre's general urban development process, not to be affected by the river's dynamics anymore.

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21. The excavation was rather fruitless on the other hand, as it went only 1,60 m. deep before getting interrupted by the appearance of ground-water, having found so far only very wet fillings with much altered ceramic material from several times.
22. GUERRERO LOVILLO, J. *Op. cit.*
23. VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ, R. *Op. cit.*
24. BOSCH VILÁ, Jacinto. *La Sevilla islámica: 712-1248*. 2ª Ed. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1984.
25. IBN HAYYAN EN TAHIRI, A. 2009 *op. cit.* p.18
26. Capital city of the Rif's Emirate of Nakour, located in the whereabouts of Alhoceima Bay, Morocco, which was the first city founded in the Mahgreb during Islam expansion, and thus an early model for western Muslim town planning.
27. En VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ, R. (1988)
28. CHALMETA (1973) EN VALOR PIECHOTTA, Magdalena. *Sevilla Almohade*. Málaga: Sarriá, 2008. p. 160.
29. VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ, R. (1988) *op. cit.*
30. *Op. cit.*
31. RUÍZ LÓPEZ, U; GARCÍA MORALES, I. (2002) *op. cit.*
32. *Op. cit.*
33. Both in Collantes de Terán map and EMASESA's tacheometric data, these contour lines are altered by a filling intended to increase Juan Pérez Montalbán Street's height, which is documented to have been made during the 19th century (see note 34). This elevation can be easily noticed today, as Cruz de la Tinaja Street comes out to Joaquín Costa at such a height difference that a few steps are needed.
34. This approach was already used by Alfonso del Pozo y Barajas in his morphological study of Seville's Calzada neighbourhood, in which growth by advancing the building line from the San Benito Monastery's back wall was also conditioned by the Tagarete River's flood line. See DEL POZO Y BARAJAS, Alfonso. *Sevilla, elementos de Análisis Urbano*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2003.
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36. *Ibid.*
37. EN ESCARTÍN GONZÁLEZ, Eduardo. *Economía y Sociedad en la Sevilla Almorávide*. Sevilla: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2008.
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ABSTRACTS

This paper sets out more plausible a hypothesis than those formulated to the moment regarding the early development of the urban tissue enclosed amidst Seville's streets Feria, Castelar, Pasaje Morgado, Perís Mencheta and the Alameda de Hércules. It is grounded on a historical approach, supported by archaeological, topographic and geological data in order to identify its origins as an Islamic Seville's suburb destined to industrial activities, which took shape between mid 9th century and the construction of the almoravid-almohad wall. Consequently it defends the

hypothesis of Bab al Hadid gate being opened by command of Abd al Rahman II on the Imperial Roman wall in the whereabouts of San Juan de la Palma Square.

INDEX

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